

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T SECTO 3053

N O D I S C H E R O K E E

WHITE HOUSE FOR THE PRESIDENT AND DR. BRZEZINSKI; DEPARTMENT
FOR ACTING SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS), PFOR, UR
SUBJECT: SALT DISCUSSIONS

1. AS I REPORTED EARLIER, BREZHNEV AND I MET TODAY
FOR AN HOUR, AND HE READ THROUGH A FORMAL WRITTEN
REJECTION OF BOTH OF OUR SALT PROPOSALS. THOUGH HE
USED SOME STRONG LANGUAGE ABOUT INEQUITABILITY AND
INCONSISTENCY WITH VLADIVOSTOK, HE WAS VERY CAREFUL
TO TIE HIS PRESENTATION IN WITH OUR AGREEMENT TO RESUME
DISCUSSIONS WITH GROMYKO IN MAY. AT ONE POINT HE SAID
THAT WE SHOULD NOT CONCLUDE THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE DOOMED
AND THAT THERE WAS STILL TIME TO THINK AND TALK ABOUT
THE QUESTION BEFORE MY MEETING WITH GROMYKO IN MAY.
HE WAS ALSO CAREFUL TO TAKE NOTE THAT WE HAD MADE
PROGRESS ON OTHER ISSUES, WHICH, IN FACT, IS QUITE TRUE.

2. HE SPENT THE REMAINDER OF HIS HALF-HOUR PRESENTATION
ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND MBFR. HE STRESSED THAT WE MUST
COOPERATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND AGAIN REFERRED TO MY
MEETING WITH GROMYKO. ON MBFR, HE SPOKE, I BELIEVE FOR
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THE RECORD IN ATTACKING OUR PROPOSALS.

3. ONE NOTE OF CONCERN WAS HIS STATEMENT THAT IN LIGHT OF THE
DEVELOPMENTS, HE BELIEVED THAT FBS PROBLEM, WHICH
HAD BEEN DEFERRED, WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE SETTLED WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS. THIS MAY
BE REAL TROUBLE.

4. I CAREFULLY REBUTTED HIS CHARACTERIZATION OF OUR PROPOSALS AS ONE-SIDED, NOTING THAT DEFERRAL WAS CONSISTENT WITH VLADIVOSTOK, AND THAT THE COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL WAS A BOLD NEW STEP IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES. BREZHNEV HAD NO NEGOTIATING ROOM. HE OBVIOUSLY WANTED TO END THE SESSION, AND DID NOT APPEAR VERY HAPPY WITH THE OUTCOME. I TOOK ON HIS STATEMENT ABOUT FBS POINTING OUT THIS WOULD CAUSE US TO BRING IN THE IMRB'S AND IRBM'S INCLUDING THE SS-20 IF THEY PERSISTED.

5. MY VIEW IS THAT THEY HAVE CALCULATED, PERHAPS MISTAKENLY, THAT PRESSURE WILL BUILD ON US TO TAKE ANOTHER POSITION. ONE OF THEIR PROBLEMS APPARENTLY IS THEY FEEL THAT WE HAVE DEPARTED TOO FAR FROM THE BASIC VLADIVOSTOK FRAMEWORK. THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THIS REFLECTS ON BREZHNEV PERSONALLY, SINCE HE WAS THE CO-SIGNER OF THE VLADIVOSTOK ACCORDS. INDEED, ONE CONSTANT THEME OF THEIRS WAS THAT AGREEMENTS ARE MADE BY GOVERNMENTS, NOT PERSONALITIES.

6. IN ANY CASE, ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS ON SALT WERE DEFINITELY DISAPPOINTING, WE SHOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED. A CERTAIN TESTING PERIOD WAS PROBABLY TO BE EXPECTED. THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT ENDED THE DISCUSSIONS, AND, INDEED, SEEM EAGER TO KEEP SALT AS A KEY ELEMENT IN MY NEXT MEETING WITH GROMYKO.

7. WE MADE SOME PROGRESS ON OTHER ARMS
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CONSTRAINTS WHICH WILL BE TESTED WHEN THE VARIOUS EXPERTS WORKING GROUPS GET UNDER WAY. YOU WILL HAVE RECEIVED THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH STRIKES A NEUTRAL TONE, AND INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS STILL WISH TO KEEP THE DOOR OPEN.
VANCE

SECRET

NNN

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